Cuverville, September and October

Criticisms of *La Porte etroite. — It* is hard for them to admit that these different books cohabited, still cohabit, in my mind. They follow one another only on paper and through the great impossibility of letting them be written together. Whatever the book I am writing, I never give myself to it utterly, and the subject that claims me most insistently immediately afterward, develops meanwhile at the other extremity of me. It will not be easy to trace the trajectory of my mind; its curve will reveal itself only in my style and will escape most people. If someone, in my latest writing, thinks that he can finally seize my likeness, let him be undeceived: it is always from my last-born that I am most different.

Letter to Lucien Rolmer (stupid article) —he praised *L'Immoraliste* at the expense of my *Porte etroite.*

"Obviously it is a great pleasure to be compared to crystal! . . . But what a strange confusion you make between the painter and the model. Because he wrote *The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul* does Goethe seem to you any narrower? — If I were only the author of *L'Immoraliste,* which you admire so much, then it is that I should feel myself shrinking."

In order to describe something well, one must not have one's nose on top of it.

Sunday, 7 November

Ruyters, Philippe, Riviere, Copeau, Drouin, and Claudel have come.
Monday: Steinheil trial with Copeau and Boylesve.[4]
Tuesday: dinner at ClaudeFs with Philippe and the Frizeaus (much to be said — but no time).

The book now strikes me as a nougat in which the almonds are good (i.e.[5] the letters and journal of Alissa), but in which the filling is pasty, nondescript writing; but it couldn't have been otherwise with the use of the first person, the flabby character of my J6r6me implying flabby

prose. *§o* that, all things considered, I think the book well done. But
how eager I am to write something differentl It will be ten years before
I can again use the words: *love, heart, soul,* etc* . . .

LateNovember

Reading *Arsdne Cuillot,* first to myself, then, right afterward, aloud
to Em. I didn't know anytlimg of the kind in Merim^e. Why isn't it bet-

[4] In November 1909, after a year in prison, the beautiful and wealthy Marguerite Japy Steinheil, who had been the intimate confidante of President Felix Faure, was tried for the double murder of her mother, Mme Edouard Japy, and of her husband, the painter Adolphe Steinheil. After a most sensational trial she was acquitted on 14 November 1909,